

APPLICANT ARGUMENTS OR REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9-14, 16-17 and 19-21 are now in the application. Claims 1, 11 and 21 are independent claims.

Response to Response to Arguments

Note of difference of opinion between Examiners

A previous Office Action of April 17, 2008, issued by Examiner Gaddy admitted that Strubbe did not disclose a context database.

The current Office Action, issued by Examiner Godbold, disagrees with Examiner Gaddy and now finds that a context database is implicit in Strubbe's disclosure. In particular, Examiner Gaddy finds that the data gathered by Strubbe in constructing a mood/personality classifier, an environment/user state signal and in using previous responses, constitute context elements and, as these have to more stored, a context database is disclosed.

Applicants respectfully disagree with this current finding.

Strubbe discloses an environment-responsive, user interface that simulates personal interaction. Strubbe's interface attempts to determine the current mood and personality of the person interacting with the interface, as well as the current environment in which the user is situated as they interact with the interface. Strubbe's interface may then adopt a corresponding, or complementary, attitude in responding to the user. To do this, Strubbe's interface makes use of an environment/user state signal and a mood/personality state signal. Both the mood/personality state, and the environment/user state are based on data such as current light levels, room temperature, tone of voice, incidence of superlatives, etc. as well as previous responses. The context of this data relates to a specific, current user and the environment that the user is currently situated in.

Applicants' interface uses context in a very different way, as described in, for instance, paragraph [0050]. In one embodiment of applicants' interface, the main question-answer database may be populated automatically using software to search through online news databases such as newspaper websites. When an answer to a query is obtained, the interface may also obtain or calculate a real world context element such as an optimism index. The value of the real world context element with the answer that may then be associated with the answer to the query in the answer-response database. The real-world

context element may be based on events such as the current performance of sports team in the newspapers locale, or the state of the stock market, or the result of a poll or a survey.

In applicant's interface, the real world context element may be related to the answer obtained for the question-answer database, and need not have anything to do with the person interacting with the user interface. When selecting one of several possible answers to a query, the user interface may select the one associated with the same, or closest, real world context element to the current value of that real world context element. As a simplistic example, on a day when the Yankees baseball team have just lost a game, the user interface may select an answer to a query that was obtained on another, previous, occasion when the Yankees had just lost rather than the answer to the same, or similar, query that was obtained on an occasion when the Yankees had won a game.

To clarify this difference, applicants' claim 1 now reads, in relevant part:

autonomously updating a context database with at least one real-world context element selected from the group consisting of a score in a sporting contest, a value of a market index, a value of a commodity, a result of a poll and a result of a survey, or a combination thereof; and

autonomously generating a natural language response to a received natural language input, wherein said generating a response comprises following a conversation strategy, choosing at least one real-world context element from a said context database and searching said updated statement-response database using said one context element to select a response.

Independent claims 11 and 21 have similar language.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2,6-8 and 10-12 as being anticipated over Strubbe (US Patent 6,721,706).

As detailed above, applicants contend that the context database disclosed by Strubbe is different from applicants' context database. In order to further clarify this difference, applicants' claims 1 and 11 now read, in relevant part:

autonomously updating a context database with at least one real-world context element selected from the group consisting of a score in a sporting contest, a value of a market index, a value of a commodity, a result of a poll and a result of a survey, or a combination thereof;

As Strubbe fails to disclose, or make obvious, a context database in which the data element is a score in a sporting contest, a value of a market index, a value of a commodity, a result of a poll and a result of a survey, Strubbe does not anticipate, or make obvious, applicants' claimed invention of claims 1 or 11. Applicants, therefore, request that this rejection be withdrawn and independent claims 1 and 11 be allowed.

As claims 2,6-8, 10 and 12 now depend from, and include all the limitations, of an allowable claim, applicants request that the rejection of them be withdrawn and they be allowed.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 3 and 13 are rejected under Strubbe in view of Dagtas (US 6,973,256)

Claims 4, 5, 14 and 21 are rejected under Strubbe in view of Gusler (US 7,058,565)

Claims 9 and 19 are rejected under Strubbe in view of Takebayashi (US 6,357,596)

As detailed above, applicants contend that the context database disclosed by Strubbe is different from applicants' context database. In order to further clarify this difference, applicants' independent claim 21 now reads, in relevant part:

autonomously updating a context database with at least one real-world context element selected from the group consisting of a score in a sporting contest, a value of a market index and a value of a commodity, or a combination thereof;

As Strubbe fails to disclose, or make obvious, a context database in which the data element is a score in a sporting contest, a value of a market index or a value of a commodity, Strubbe does not anticipate, or make obvious, applicants' claimed invention of claim 21. Applicants, therefore, request that this rejection be withdrawn and independent claim 21 be allowed.

As claims 3-5, 13, 14 and 19 now depend from, and include all the limitations of, an allowable claim, applicants request that the rejection of them be withdrawn and they be allowed.

Summary

Therefore in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments, favorable reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of all rejections and objections and that claims 1-7, 9-14, 16-17 and 19-21 be allowed at an early date and the patent allowed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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